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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, glorious in strength and marvelous in majesty, we ascribe to You the glory due Your Name. You have elevated this Nation and sustained it through its history. Keep us from forgetting that righteousness exalts, but sin destroys.

Lord, infuse our Senators with the spirit of humility, enabling them to refuse to become legends in their own minds. May they cultivate esteem for others, seeking for opportunities to practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. As they work to find common ground, give them Your wisdom and peace.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Democratic leader is recognized.

CLEAN POWER PLAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was disappointed last night to learn that the Supreme Court temporarily halted the implementation of President Obama's Clean Power Plan program. This was an especially stunning move by the Su-

preme Court, given that just weeks ago the DC Circuit Court of Appeals categorically rejected a halt in the Clean Power Plan and States do not need to start implementing the plan until 2022.

This shortsighted decision by the Court's five conservative Justices is an unfortunate setback. It unnecessarily puts into question a major part of our country's effort to address climate change and protect our environment. Notwithstanding my amazement, I remain confident that the Obama administration's carbon rules are legally sound and will prevail in the courts.

In the landmark case *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*, the Supreme Court itself directed the Environmental Protection Agency to address climate change if carbon pollution was found to be a danger to human health. Based on enormous scientific evidence, the EPA did make that finding and the Agency is required by law to regulate carbon pollution. I can't imagine that the Supreme Court would take such an unprecedented and drastic step at this time. But the unparalleled nature of the Supreme Court's decisions show why Congress must play a role in addressing climate change.

Climate-denying Republicans in the House and Senate might applaud this decision, but their refusal to protect Americans from the impact of climate change is the real loss for our country.

NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is no nation on this planet more dedicated to fear and intimidation than North Korea. Its leader Kim Jong Un is a brutal dictator. He will stop at nothing to keep his power intact and his people isolated. That has been proven.

To accomplish these objectives, the North Korean Government relies on threats to Japan and other neighbors and, of course, the United States. Recently, the number of alarming devel-

opments out of North Korea has accelerated. These acts of aggression are extremely concerning to the American community, as they should be.

Last Saturday, North Korea defied international warnings and launched a rocket using ballistic missile technology. This was a flagrant violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. This came less than a month after North Korea detonated a nuclear device, also in clear violation of international law.

That brings us to yesterday, when the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, confirmed that North Korea has restarted a plutonium reactor. The Director estimated that North Korea would be able to recover fuel from its reactor within a matter of weeks or months.

The international community quickly condemned these incidents, as it should have. President Obama has been a leader in pushing back against the saber-rattling from North Korea. He has worked to galvanize the world in opposing North Korea's provocative and destabilizing behavior. Under the President's leadership, the United States has built a global coalition, including China and Russia, to impose sanctions against North Korea.

There is an international consensus that North Korea's actions violate international law and threaten our allies and partners in the region. Here in the Capitol there is also broad bipartisan agreement that there must be consequences for North Korea's provocations. The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed new sanctions legislation. Now the Senate must act. We need to do it today. Two weeks ago the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved the sanctions bill that is now before this body.

This legislation would require the President to investigate and sanction any person who knowingly imports into North Korea certain goods, technologies, service, training or advice

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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concerning weapons of mass destruction. It also directs the President to investigate and sanction people who engage in human rights abuses, money laundering and related activities, and cyber terrorism or other cyber vandalism.

In addition, the legislation authorizes \$15 million to transmit radio broadcasts to North Korea for the next 5 years. These are commonsense steps that Congress should take in response to North Korea's unwarranted provocation. Everyone in the Senate agrees that North Korea's aggression cannot go unanswered. Its actions threaten the peace and security of the region and, actually, the world. I hope my colleagues will join with me in passing this legislation today to send a message to Kim Jong Un that his reckless behavior will not go unanswered.

TRIBUTE TO ED PESCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I so admire the family we have here in the Senate. Many people work ceaselessly to make sure the Senate runs well. In the Senate Periodical Press Gallery, a small group of nonpartisan staffers helps the congressional press office to work together with the communications staff of Senators and their committees. Their fingerprints can be found on nearly every part of the Senate's business.

The Senate Periodical Press Gallery facilitates key parts of Senate business, including press access, print and digital media planning, security protocols, and communications across hundreds of thousands of media platforms. For over 15 years, one man has been at the helm of this exceptionally fine team. His name is Ed Pesce. After graduating from Loyola University in 1990, Ed began working in the Senate Periodical Press Gallery. During his 26 years of service, Ed has always acted with warmth and professionalism.

As the news industry transitioned from sole dependence on print and traditional mediums to a thriving combination of print and digital media, Ed ensured the Senate Periodical Press Gallery was not left behind. He created the first Web site for the Senate Periodical Press Gallery way back in 1999 and developed a social media communications program since then.

Ed has been a trailblazer in the news industry and a principal leader here in the Senate. He has served under 11 Sergeants at Arms. During countless historic achievements here in the Senate, he has seen so much. When asked what they will miss most, Ed's coworkers recall his infectious laughter and dedication to team building.

Last year, Ed announced that he would retire after more than two decades of service. I congratulate him for his many dedicated years of remarkable service. I wish Ed and John, his husband, all the best in the years to come. On behalf of my colleagues, our staff, and the entire congressional com-

munity, I extend my gratitude to Ed for his tireless commitment to the Senate.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO ED PESCE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I too wish to say a few words about Ed Pesce, who today, after 25 years of Federal service, is retiring as the director of the Senate Periodical Press Gallery. Ed has been a fixture around here for years. You could usually find him right outside the Chamber, behind the saloon swinging doors of the Senate Periodical Press Gallery.

When George Mitchell was the majority leader, that is where you found him. When Bob Dole had the job, that is where you found him. It has been true ever since. But you can sometimes find Ed in other places too. Some mornings you can spot Ed at the gym on a spin cycle. Later in the evening, you might see Ed queuing for the premiere of a Star Wars sequel, maybe even a prequel.

At almost any other time, you likely would find Ed buried in a book. Fiction is one of his favorite genres; history is the other. He certainly witnessed plenty of it firsthand. He oversaw media planning and execution for six Presidential inaugurations, for half a dozen Republican Conventions, and for just as many Democratic ones, not to mention hundreds of congressional hearings and press conferences.

Ed is a Baltimore native who came to the Senate Periodical Press Gallery shortly after graduating from Loyola. He diligently worked his way through the ranks, and after a decade spent learning the tricks of the trade, he assumed his current role back in 2000. The job has brought Ed in contact with thousands of Senate staffers and congressional reporters. It necessitated many long hours and plenty of late nights. It presented ample amounts of tense situations as well.

But Ed never lost his good attitude or his boisterous laugh. Just ask his staff. "Funloving," "thoughtful," "tough, but fair"—that is how people who work closest with Ed describe him.

At 6 feet 2 inches, Ed Pesce is hard to miss, but I know he will be missed here in the Senate when he leaves. He took on a tough job with a great attitude. He gained a lot of fans. It is a legacy that anyone could be proud of. I think I can speak for my colleagues when I say that we thank Ed for his many years of service. We send him our best, and we look forward to seeing what he will be able to accomplish in the next chapter of his life.

NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today the Senate has an opportunity to

pass bipartisan legislation that would add to our Nation's ability to hold North Korea accountable for its growing aggression. North Korea threatens regional stability and our own national security. It threatens allies in the region, especially South Korea and Japan.

As General Clapper stated yesterday, it is a country that will continue to advance its nuclear program. I would urge my colleagues to vote yes to the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act today so we can work toward keeping our Nation and our allies safer.

CLEAN POWER PLAN REGULATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on yet another matter, a few years ago the Obama administration rolled out a massive regulatory scheme they dubbed a "Clean Power Plan," an odd choice, given that it would not have a meaningful impact on global emissions or the health of our planet. Here is what those massive regulations likely would do, though: ship middle-class jobs overseas, punish the poor, impose more pain on Kentucky coal families who just want to put food on the table—all for the sake, one must assume, of letting well-off folks on the left feel better about themselves for "doing something."

It is pretty clear that the administration's energy regulations threaten a lot of middle-class pain for hardly any substantive environmental gain. There is another huge problem too. These regulations are, in my view, likely illegal. Yesterday's Supreme Court order is just the latest sign of that. If nothing else, it shows we were right to let Governors know their options. We thought Governors should know they could take a wait-and-see approach before locking their States into some massive regulatory scheme. We thought Governors should know the economic jeopardy they would place their States in by moving ahead without a clearer understanding first of what might be legally required. We thought Governors should not feel bullied by the heavy hand of this administration. That cautious approach was the most responsible one, in my view. Yesterday's decision shows it was a prudent one as well. We will see what the Supreme Court ultimately decides, but we are going to keep fighting against these regressive regulations regardless.

It is worth remembering how we got here in the first place. President Obama tried to push a regressive, anti-middle class energy tax through a Democratic-controlled Congress, and his own party said no. That was in 2010 when Democrats controlled the Senate. They said no. He simply went around Congress to impose a similarly regressive plan anyway.

Kentuckians in the eastern part of my State are experiencing a severe depression—a depression that policies